

Chapter 17

Firestorm





I don't believe it.



Look at that!

That mage...

Is anyone here
a fire mage?!

The storm's still there, but-



He hurt it!

He can win!



Honestly, I'm almost disappointed.

The last storm I destroyed was much more interesting.

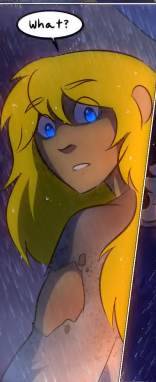


You-

Can you feel it?

You're losing their fear.







What?

I think you mean, "wow, it's great to see you again!"

No. Listen to me. Everything Tynan has done so far has been predictable.

He sees mortals as fuel for his divine power, an audience to terrorize and control.

His power depends on an image of invincibility.

And you've actually hurt him. That's never happened before.



He's already furious, and he's getting desperate.

I have no idea what he's going to do next.

Let us worry about that.

I can't.

Not if you're here because of me.

I'm the reason you went into this fight wounded.

And it's just a guess— But I don't think anyone here wants to be the reason you die.



Vash was the only one who ever defeated him. If he proves I can't do the same, he tells the world there's no hope of stopping him.

He couldn't resist fighting me, and he can't resist making it a show.

But mortals are just his audience. You're not supposed to fight back.

Kendal, we're WINNING. We're not going to run.

I've done more damage in two minutes than you did the whole time you were fighting.

He won't kill ME until he proves his point.

He won't hesitate with the rest of you, and I can't keep all of you safe.



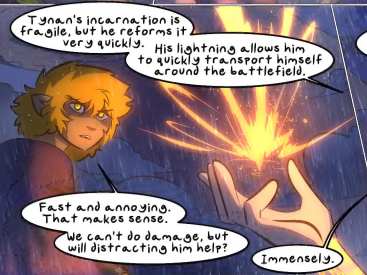
You said more fire, right?

Ah - yes!

Focus on the clouds, not his body. If the storm is diminished enough, he'll stop being able to manifest.

Got it.

I'll see what I can do.



Tynan's incarnation is fragile, but he reforms it very quickly.

His lightning allows him to quickly transport himself around the battlefield.

Fast and annoying. That makes sense.

We can't do damage, but will distracting him help?

Immensely.

If he stops me before I finish destroying the storm, we might actually be in trouble.

All right.

You up for this?

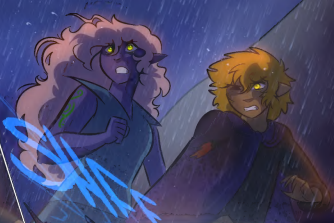
I - yeah, the soil's great out here. I can keep him busy.



Protect Erin.

I'll handle Tynan.





Are you done playing around?



Yick.



Pointless.



Pointless!



Whoop!

Let me get that for you.





And THIS!

What is THIS?!



Have ALL the mortals gone mad -
-or have you just collected the defective ones that have forgotten what immortality means?!



They know exactly what you are.
You're the one who doesn't understand.



Mortals fight for their lives every minute of every day.

They can't take eternity for granted like you.

Even if it were hopeless, some of them would STILL fight you.

If it were-?!

Yes.

And even an ordinary, terrified mortal will rally if they think they can win.



Vash didn't just defeat you.
He taught them you can LOSE.

Nothing you do can take that away from them.



They'll never stop trying to get rid of you.

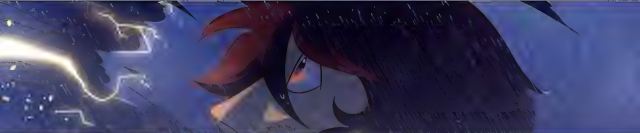


Your reign of terror was over before it even began.







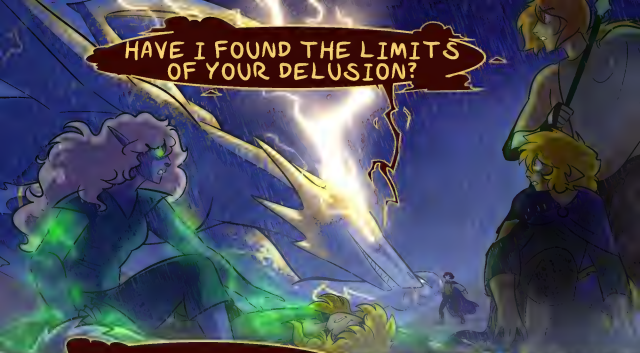


LITTLE



WIZARD





HAVE I FOUND THE LIMITS
OF YOUR DELUSION?



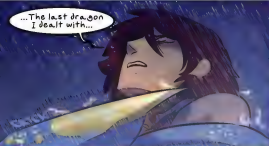
DO YOU STILL THINK
I CAN BE SOLVED?



WHEW!



CRACK



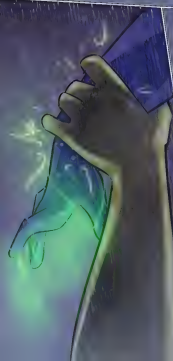
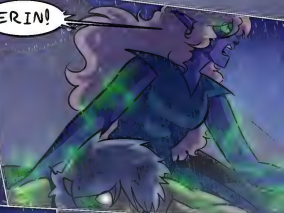
...The last dragon
I dealt with...



...didn't have to try this
hard to scare me.

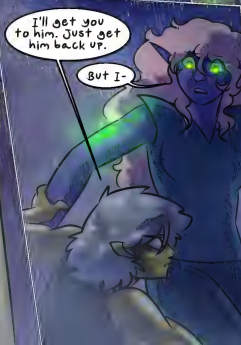


ERIN!



I'll get you
to him. Just get
him back up.

But I-



I can't be
everywhere!



Is this
a trick?

No trick.

I can't force you
anything until you make these
materials your own.

Arrogant
little splinter!

What do you mean?

You, on the other hand,
were built in a crater.

If the weapon is going
to be yours, every part needs
to be yours as well.

Your bones are a LOT
more dense. Did Vash weave
metal into them?

You wouldn't want a weapon
you couldn't control, would you?

You must be Kradal,
both blades and man.

How interesting!

Not so
easy, is it?

I never thought
you'd take my advice
quite so literally.
But integrating
the metal into your body
was an inspired move!

It is nature's born.

Hold on! That's not what I
was supposed to do with it!

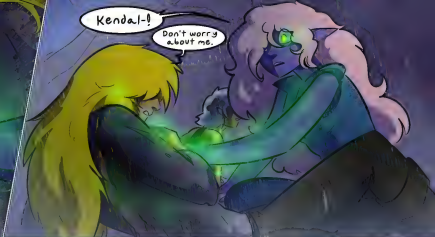
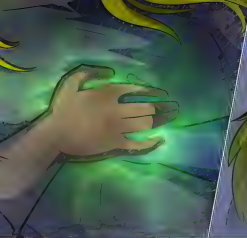
Vash endured for hours
before he woke the starfire
in that blade.
And he couldn't die.

"Supposed to?"
Really, Vash.

I think I need the sword
to connect with him.

You of all people should
know there's no one right
way to do anything.

What am I
supposed to do?!



Kendal-!

Don't worry
about me.



Help Erin.

I'll handle Tynan-

Stop it!

Why do you keep
DOING this?!



LOOK at him!

Look at what
he DID to you!

How can you act like
that doesn't matter?!



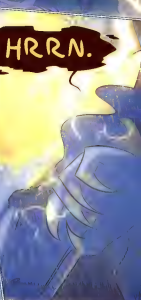
How many times are you
going to make me save you?



I'm sorry.



It won't
happen again.





...Huh.

Tynan's new form seems a lot more solid than his little body was.

He wasn't feeling the hits before.



How is he?

Uh-

It's - it's not good, but I can work with it.

Good.



I don't think it's easy for him to stay like this.

This form is powerful, but it's definitely not comfortable for him.

He's keeping it together because he can't afford to rebuild it from scratch.

He's getting closer!

Don't worry.



He really shouldn't have turned into a dragon.





CRACK!

GRAAAAAAHH!

YOU...

STILL don't UNDERSTAND.

FWAP



WHOOOSH



STOP ME!

YOU

CAN'T

Ngh!



Oh, this is wonderful!
It feels nothing like the
winds of the storm!

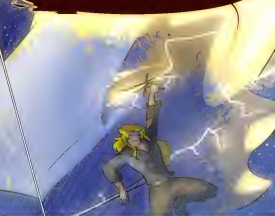


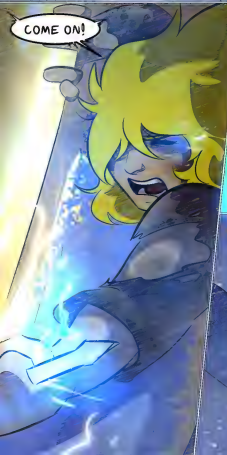
I should've taken this
form centuries ago!

Stop!



Stop me yourself.











Ah!

WAAAAH!

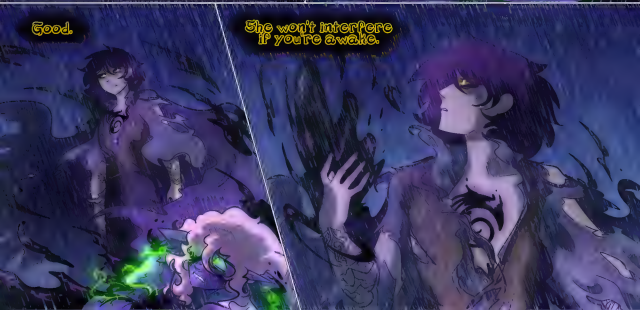


WAAAAH!!

Whoa! What-?!

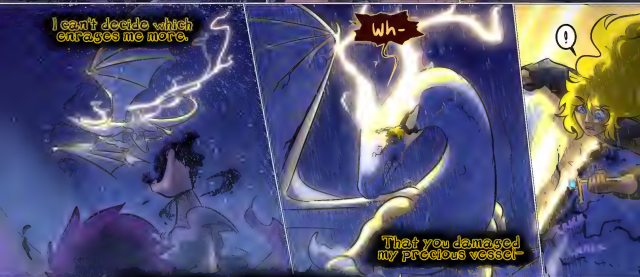
S-stay away!
Don't touch it!

Still awake?



Good.

She won't interfere
if you're awake.

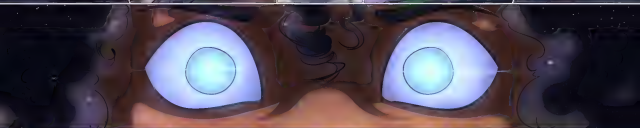
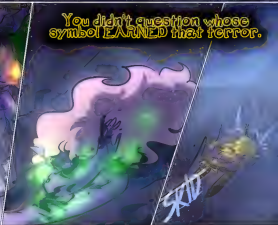




You referred yourself
into a symbol of terror.



You didn't question whose
symbol **EARNED** that terror.



You have made a
mistake, little god.



You will not
make another.



What do you mean, "not Erin?"
How did he do that?
What's going on?!

Shake it off,
you useless-
He- he's being
controlled.



It's some kind of... ancient dragon
primordial. Like the elementals, but not dead.
He can't control its power at all.

If that black energy he's giving
off touches you, it... poisons you somehow.
Turns your body against itself.

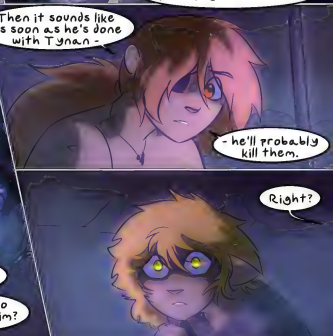
Even if you can heal.



So what do we do?
How do we stop it?

I... I don't know. I've
never even SEEN it before.

He said Kendal and Alinva can
fight it - survive it somehow, but I-
ah!



Then it sounds like
as soon as he's done
with Tynan -

- he'll probably
kill them.

I don't think they can
even MOVE right now-

Those two
can stop him?



Right?



Okay.
That makes
this easier.



...What are you-?

This is wyrm silk.
It's fireproof.

It should protect you
if I get too close.

Don't you get it?
He'll kill you!



That's not what
I'm afraid of.

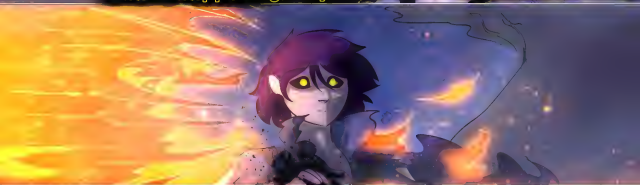
Y-you-
How are you-

Oh, dear.

I like that.

You don't even understand
what's happening, do you?

How it must pain you
to die in ignorance.



Someone's bold.



...Well.

This is new.

I certainly didn't design
humans to do that.
Really, who would?

Fire was something of
a problem, you know. Too much like me
in many ways.

Highly destructive.
A temper, of course.

Charming habit of killing
everything he touched.

But I'm sure you
already know all this.

I'm sure it seemed like
a good idea at the time.

If there's anything left
of your soul in there-

After all, you seem to
have just let him eat you.

I hope it appreciates
that this is a mercy.



Free will did your
species no favors.







I can't kill it?

Of course I can!

I ALREADY killed Fire!
A Fragment cannot thwart me!

I just can't kill it-

Before it kills my vessel!

How can it resist me when
Fire himself could not?!

If I release control, it
might stop the onslaught-

No! It's mindless with Fury!
It'd kill him without even noticing!

There's nothing
I can do!



Can you hear me?